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World Athletics approves gender eligibility test



The next Olympic Games will be held in Los Angeles in 2028

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World Athletics has approved the introduction of a test to determine if an athlete is biologically female.

Those wishing to compete in women's competition will need to complete the "pre-clearance requirement" once in their career.

While no timeline has been officially confirmed, the Press Association says that World Athletics is aiming to have it in place for September's World Championships in Tokyo.

The move is among several recommendations that have been approved at the World Athletics Council meeting to tighten regulations over the eligibility of transgender and difference of sex development (DSD) athletes.

Lord Coe, the governing body's president, said the decision was further evidence that World Athletics would "doggedly" protect the female category.

"It's important to do it because it maintains everything that we've been talking about, and particularly recently, about not just talking about the integrity of female women's sport, but actually guaranteeing it," he added.

"We feel this is a really important way of providing confidence and maintaining that absolute focus on the integrity of competition."

World Athletics said it was now working to put in place the testing with the timeline to be agreed "over the next few weeks".

The test will look for the SRY gene which is part of the Y chromosome and causes male characteristics to develop.

A cheek swab test will determine if SRY is present, while a dried blood spot test could also be used to determine an athlete's testosterone levels.

World Athletics said the test was "a highly accurate proxy for biological sex" that would need to be taken just once by an athlete during their career.

During a consultation, the majority of stakeholders "agreed that allowing only biological female athletes to compete in the female category was essential to maintaining fairness", according to World Athletics.

Two years ago, World Athletics banned transgender athletes who had gone through male puberty from competing in the female category in international competition.

Last month, its working group recommended further steps.

This was on the basis of fresh evidence which it said showed there was a "significant performance gap before the onset of puberty".

In addition, World Athletics will also merge regulations for both DSD and transgender athletes after the working group said new evidence showed

testosterone suppression "can only ever partly mitigate the overall male advantage in the sport of athletics".

The current rules for DSD athletes required them to reduce their testosterone levels to a set level for at least six months to compete in any female category event internationally.

Ban on Russian & Belarusian athletes 'adequate'



Russian and Belarusian athletes were permitted to compete at the Paris 2024 Games as neutrals

During their meeting in China this week, the World Athletics Council also approved a recommendation that the current sanctions on Russian and Belarusian athletes are "adequate".

Competitors from the two countries have been banned from World Athletics events, including under a neutral flag, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Athletes have not been able to compete for Russia since November 2015 after state-sponsored doping was uncovered.

The doping suspension was lifted in March 2023, but the nation remained banned because of the war in Ukraine.

World Athletics said the sanctions "do not need to be replaced, added to or varied unless either the current circumstances deteriorate significantly or there is a peace agreement".